



*The
First Century of
Lake Champlain*

Caroline Halstead Royce



THE ISLAND OF PÊRE JOGUES

Photograph by C. E. Smith, Westport

The First Century of Lake Champlain

By

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BY CAROLINE HALSTRAD ROYCE

The Lake Speaks

Far stretch my shining leagues; come, trust to me,
O sons of men, and follow where I lead.
Leave the cool forest shadows to the deer,
And seek the sun. Wampum and fleur-de-lis,
Arrow and bullet, furry winter coats
Of little neighbors—bring your treasures all,
And I will speed your journey, north or south.
Ask me no secrets. 'Tis the fickle earth
Gives up the dagger or the victim's curse.
See you my beckoning distance? There it lies,
Your promised country! Launch your boat, and come!

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THE DISCOVERER



IT was the third of July, 1609, a clear and sunny day of our beautiful northern summer, with the sky blue as sapphire, the water shining and sparkling in little waves, and the shores green with thick foliage—great trees growing close to the water's edge, and wild grape vines running over them. Out from the river of the Iroquois southward into the lake came a little fleet of twenty-four light birch-bark canoes, paddled by a painted and feathered crew of sixty Algonquin and Huron braves on the war-path. In the foremost canoe, kneeling in the frail craft so that he might look forward, was a white man, the first who had ever seen the lake, gazing eagerly into the distance, and scanning the shores with the keen observation of a trained explorer. His eyes were dark and bright, set wide apart, with arching brows, his nose was long and straight, his mouth both firm and mobile, with a small moustache and a goatee on the chin. His dark hair fell in his neck in short, glossy curls. He wore a soft, wide hat, a close-fitting doublet with rolling collar, long hose drawn up from ankle to thigh, and the Indian moccasins. A bandoleer with an ammunition box

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crossed his shoulders, a sword was by his side, and one hand lightly grasped his arquebus. He was then about thirty-two years of age, an officer of the King of France, experienced in war and in exploration, and his name was Samuel de Champlain.

As the lovely prospect widened before him, islands and cliffs and wooded shores, with blue mountain ranges bounding the horizon, he was saying to himself: "This is the great lake of which the Algonquins told me last winter in our cabins at Quebec. It leads far away to the south, to the country of their bitterest foes, the Iroquois. What a kingdom for my sovereign and my faith!"

At that moment there was not another white man on all this continent between Champlain and the little colony of Englishmen on the James River in Virginia. A few weeks later Henry Hudson, the English captain of a Dutch ship, sailed up the North River in the "Half Moon" to the head of navigation. The Pilgrims did not land from the "Mayflower" at Plymouth until eleven years later.

Champlain's party passed slowly through the lake, hunting and fishing, and Champlain explored it very thoroughly, the Indians pointing out the headlands and shoals and landmarks that their fathers had taught them to know, with all the pride of natives of the soil showing their ancestral possessions to a stranger. They paddled by day and camped on shore at night, sleeping in the woods under shelters of bark. As they drew nearer to the southern end of the lake, and nearer to the enemy's country, they slept by day and

traveled by night, stealthily and swiftly, like so many panthers with glowing eyes fixed on their prey.

On July 30th the battle was fought which has been so many times described, from the vivid details given by Champlain himself in his published Voyages. His party of northern Indians was met at the peninsula of Ticonderoga by two hundred Iroquois from the Mohawk valley. Both parties left their canoes and went on shore to fight. Champlain stepped out in front of his howling and leaping savages, and the Iroquois stood paralyzed at sight of him. He had put on for the battle light armor which he carried with him, a back-piece, cuisses, and a helmet with plumes. The Iroquois chiefs wore plumes, too, eagle's feathers stuck in their scalp-locks, and so Champlain was able to distinguish them. He raised his arquebus, which contained four balls, and fired, killing two chiefs and wounding a third. Then one of the other two Frenchmen who accompanied him fired another shot, and the Iroquois broke and ran, fleeing panic-stricken back through their well-known forest paths to the banks of the Mohawk. Little they knew that another generation of Iroquois would learn to aim the arquebus from the cover of the forest, and to pick off many a French settler along the St. Lawrence as he worked in his field.

Exulting as men must exult who have had thunder and lightning brought down from heaven to fight their battles for them, the Algonquins passed swiftly back through the lake with their hapless prisoners and with Champlain, and down the "river of the Iroquois" and the St. Lawrence to

Quebec, where Champlain drew an excellent map of the lake to take back with him to France when he sailed early in September. Welcomed back to his native land, he told the story of his discoveries to the king, Henry of Navarre, and many times he described the lake which he had discovered to nobles and court ladies, to sailors, to merchants and to geographers. Something of it he must have told to the gentle little girl with the fair and serious face, Marie Hélène, whom he married the next year, when she was only twelve years old, after the custom of the period, that he might obtain control of her dowry. He did not bring her to Canada with him until ten years afterward (1620), when she lived four years in Quebec. Isle Hélène at Montreal he named after her, and he planted the first rose-trees at Quebec (1611) that she might find them growing there when she came. I wonder if there are roots of those rose-trees still growing near the old ramparts.

Champlain never saw our lake again, although the greater part of his life was henceforward spent, not in France, but in Quebec. A brilliant courtier, a gallant soldier, an adventurous and fortunate explorer, a splendid figure he stands against the dark background of the wilderness, fighting its savage battles, knowing its wild, keen pleasures, and leaving his name forever fixed upon it.



THIRTY-THREE years have passed away, and it is now August of 1642. Again a party of savages are paddling their canoes through the lake from the north, but this time it is a band of Iroquois from the Mohawk valley, returning from a raid into Canada, and whooping with exultation over the prisoners they have taken on the St. Lawrence—a number of their ancient enemies, the Hurons, and three Frenchmen, missionaries to the western tribes. One of the latter is a man only a little younger than Champlain when he discovered the lake, but he carries no weapons, and he does not look forward with the eager gaze of the explorer as the unfamiliar shores unfold so rapidly in the brilliant light of the mid-summer day. He sits with his head bowed upon his breast, and when he lifts his delicate, oval face, with its sad eyes and sensitive mouth, it is to seek to exchange a look with one of his fellow captives, and to make some signal to him of comfort and of courage.

He wears a long black cassock, with a rosary and crucifix hanging from his girdle, and sandals on his feet. The cassock is stained with blood, and his hands are horribly mangled. The finger nails have been gnawed off by the teeth of the Iroquois, and the wounds are covered with

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flies and mosquitoes which he cannot drive away. His bare head shows the tonsure of the Societas Jesu—the Order of Loyola. It is Isaac Jogues, the saint and martyr, the gentlest, sweetest, most lovable in his heroism of all the Jesuit missionaries who devoted their lives to the conversion of the heathen of New France.

Jogues and his fellow prisoners were taken on shore but once during the journey through the lake. August 10, they landed on a small island near the southern end. It belongs now to the town of Westport, and it is almost in sight of the place where Champlain routed the Iroquois of the preceding generation so easily with his arquebus. Here the savages had rare sport torturing their prisoners, and the next day they carried them through a lake never before seen by white men, and which Jogues afterward named Lac St. Sacrement. Then through the forest to the Iroquois villages upon the Mohawk, and to prolonged and inconceivable tortures, renewed again and again for the eight or nine months of their captivity. Their only consolation, aside from the mournful one of each other's companionship, was an occasional opportunity to baptize a dying Indian baby, fit for baptism because it had not yet sinned, or a captive at the stake who could be induced to make some expression of comprehension or willingness to accept the religion of the stranger.

One of Jogues' companions, René Goupil, was tomahawked at his side before the winter was over, and that the mental anguish occasioned by the loss of his friend was

much keener than the pain of his physical suffering is shown by his own account published in the Jesuit Relations. The other, Guillaume Couture, was tortured with the other two, and shared in all their sufferings, but at last was adopted into an Iroquois family, and later became a messenger and interpreter between the French and the Iroquois tribes.

The next summer Jogues escaped by the help of Dutch colonists at Schenectady and Beverwyck (now Albany), who bent their shoulders bravely to "the white man's burden," giving goods for his ransom to the value of six hundred guilders—no small thing to do for a stranger so alien in blood and faith. Arendt van Curler, then the chief man among the colonists of the upper Hudson, was most active in his rescue, and Dominic Megapolensis, sent out that year by the Classis of Amsterdam, gave him a Christian welcome to Beverwyck, and sat down with him to a sociable disputation of doctrine. What a picture it is, the ruddy, round-faced Dutchman, eager to elaborate his Calvinistic theology, and the wasted figure of the Frenchman, his eyes burning with something which was not doctrine—how could they find a common ground of discussion? They never did find it, so they clasped hands and parted, each one, I hope, remembering the other in his prayers as one not beyond the possibility of ultimate attainment of the truth.

Governor Kieft at New Amsterdam gave Jogues food and clothing, and put him on board a home-bound ship, and on Christmas day of 1643 the weary traveler, just landed in

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France, heard mass once more on his native soil, in an ecstasy of joy and thankfulness. He was received with the greatest rejoicing by the friends who had given him up for dead, and all France praised and revered him, the queen herself kissing his mangled hands. The Pope listened to his story, and gave him an especial dispensation by which he was still allowed to offer the sacrifice of the mass, notwithstanding the mutilations which would otherwise have forbidden it. Moulded to the perfection of an instrument with which to work the fixed and far-reaching purposes of the Order, his zeal fanned to a still higher flame, he was sent back to finish his mission among the Iroquois.

So we see him once more upon the lake, passing through again from Canada, in the spring of 1646. This time he went in command of his own party, and bearing words of authority as a messenger to the Iroquois. Much had been learned in these four years of dealing with the savages, and by direction Jogues left off his priest's cassock, the dress which had given the Jesuits the name of "the Black Gowns" among the Dutch and Indians, and wore the ordinary short coat of the Canadian peasant. There had always been something in the meekness of Jogues, and in his devotion to the mysterious observances of his religion, which had stirred the Iroquois heart to a peculiar frenzy of hatred and fear (even the Indian women hated him, and set their children to torture him), and he was wisely endeavoring to remove every hindrance to the supreme end of gaining an ascendancy over them. With all his added experience, with the poise given him

by the subtle counsel of his superiors in France, it would seem that he might have been able to master the savages at this time, as they were mastered by some of the later Jesuit missionaries, Joncaire for instance, plotting in the wigwams of the Long House against the enemies of France and of the Order. But Jogues was born for martyrdom, and not for dominion of any kind. And not for one instant did his faithful soul harbor the thought of any other destiny. "I go back to die," said he as he bade farewell to his friends in Canada, after another journey back to Quebec in July.

When he came once more to the Mohawk villages, there was something increasingly ominous in the air. Storm, disease and blight had struck the Indian fields and wigwams, and the cry rose, "It is because of the white stranger with his sign of the cross! We torture him at our pleasure, we have made him our slave, and he mutters the incantations of a sorcerer in revenge! He must die!" And in a gust of savage rage they struck a tomahawk into his brain, October 18, 1646, as he was bending his head to enter a Mohawk wigwam. His Dutch friends heard of his death, and Governor Kieft sent the news of it to Europe, which it reached eight months after the event. All his letters and journals, which were very full, were published in 1647 in the *Jesuit Relations*—that famous collection of records from the missionaries of the Order all over the world, records of just such devotion as that of Jogues, differing only in detail. Nothing is more wonderful in the history of the religious consciousness of man than the way

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in which the Jesuit missionaries of that age sought martyrdom—and the way in which they met it. The enthusiasm of self-sacrifice was kept at a white heat by the publication of these reports, and the Jesuit Relations were like an electric battery of tremendous dynamic force, to which one more cell was added every time the story of such a life and death as that of Isaac Jogues was written therein.

And the lake will never forget him. Two hundred and fifty years after his first sad vision of these shores, a bell in a church tower in a little village near the scene of his tortures on the island (Westport-on-Lake-Champlain) was given his name in solemn ceremony. So the sweet devotion of his constant soul passes on in the veneration awakened by every stroke of the bell in hearts which know his story, and know what courage and self-sacrifice are worth. In the old French of the Relations we find a sentence which describes his character in quaint and tender words:

“Avec une patience de fer et une charité d’or.”

Arendt Van Curler



ALL through this first century the lake was French if it was not Iroquois, its nearest approach to civilization being the tiny French settlements on the St. Lawrence. But far, far away to the south, where the Mohawk River joins the Hudson, lay a little Dutch trading colonie, Rensselaerwyck, where Albany now stands. Here we shall find, not the dashing romance of the discoverer, nor the unearthly devotion of the martyr, but the dear homely virtues of the Dutch settler, sober, shrewd and kindly, busying himself only with making the wilderness into a place fit for *vrouw en kinderen*.

The principal man of this colonie was Arendt van Curler, called by the Indians "Corlear." He came from Holland in 1630 as agent for his cousin, Kiliaen van Rensselaer, the First Patroon, and for thirty-seven years managed the affairs of his vast estate on the Hudson with wisdom and efficiency. He was a man of administrative ability, both just and shrewd, and his dealings with the Indians were characterized by a cool, acute insight which gave him a control over them almost complete. He it was who had rescued Isaac Jogues from his captivity, and many another despairing Frenchman did he deliver from the savages, for the pure love of humanity.

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Twenty years after P  re Jogues was killed, the French of Canada, tormented by constant raids of the Iroquois, determined to seek them out in their homes on the Mohawk, and there defeat and subdue them. With this end in view, two expeditions went through the lake in 1666. The first was under the Chevalier de Courcelles in January, when the lake was frozen and covered with snow, deep and drifted, and the party of five hundred men traveled on snow-shoes, dragging sleds laden with their baggage and provisions. If you see a vision some winter night, under an arctic sky sparkling like steel, of a long procession of figures, wrapped in great rough blue capotes, stealing away over the shining plain to the southward, you may know that they are the ghosts of this war-party of Courcelles, engaged in the first armed invasion of Indian territory by the French of Canada. It was a wonderful march, but it accomplished nothing in the Mohawk country except the really remarkable achievement of getting back with inconsiderable loss. Worn out, frozen and starved, stricken by snow-blindness, and harassed by skirmishes of the savages, they accepted with gratitude the succor offered them by Van Curler and his settlers at Schenectady, a new settlement begun by Van Curler only five years before, twenty miles west of Ft. Orange. Van Curler warmed and fed the officers, but Courcelles would not allow the common soldiers to come inside the comfortable Dutch houses, fearing that they would never leave those cosy chimney corners to journey north with him again.

The next October came a much larger force, under Mar-

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quis de Tracy, the Governor of Canada, six hundred regular troops in uniform, six hundred Canadian militia, and an irregular body of about a hundred Indians, in three hundred boats and canoes. This was by far the largest war-party and the most picturesque spectacle of the seventeenth century, sweeping bravely on in the beautiful autumn weather, through Lake Champlain and Lake George, and then following the forest trails southwest to the Mohawk. This expedition was very successful, burning the Indian villages and destroying the crops, and bringing the savages to a frame of mind which strongly made for peace. Again the French proved the hospitality of the Dutch of Schenectady, the officers dining with Van Curler when they had finished their campaign. After their return to Canada, Gov. Tracy sent back a formal letter of invitation to Van Curler to visit him at Quebec. This was not only a personal honor to Van Curler, but a politic courtesy to an official of English possessions, as Rensselaerwyck and New Amsterdam had now become. Van Curler, after due consultation with Nicolls, the English governor at New York, accepted the invitation, and thus saw Lake Champlain for the first time. Nicolls gave him a letter to Tracy, and verbal instructions to draw a map of Lake Champlain for use in the colonial archives.

He was now a man of middle age, leaving a wife and family behind him in Schenectady. He was married not long after the time when he assisted P  re Jogues to escape from the Iroquois. In June of 1643 he wrote one of his long letters to the Patroon in "Patria" (as the early Dutch settlers

lovingly called the home-land, Holland), in which he gave an account of his ride on horseback out to the Mohawk village where the Frenchmen were held captive, and of his negotiations for their release. In this letter he informs his cousin of his approaching marriage with "Antonia Slagboom, widow of Jonas Bronck," dropping in this bit of intelligence between the most prosaic statements of business details, as though he wished it to be understood that he was not in the least excited about it, but he cannot help coming back to it once more before he closes his letter, and letting his cousin know that his Antonia "is called a good house-keeper." Doubtless she was all that, and more too, let us hope, and if she was a good wife we may be sure that her heart was heavy when he told her good-bye on his departure for Canada the 28th of May, 1667.

However, he went on a peaceful mission, and not on a journey particularly dangerous for a man with an experience of nearly forty years in forest travel, and this northward route was as well known at that day as it is now, although far less swiftly traversed. He had with him, besides his party of woodsmen for paddling and hunting, a young Frenchman called La Fontaine, just rescued from the Mohawks who had taken him prisoner, and going happily back to his friends in Canada. They carried on their shoulders from Schenectady the light bark canoes with which the journey was to be made, and launched them at the head of Lac St. Sacrement, skimming lightly over its quiet surface, and then across the portage to the lake of Champlain. Here they found safe


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passage until they reached the widest part of the lake (what we call "broad lake," between Burlington and Essex), when a sudden storm came up. They probably tried to gain the shelter of Willsboro bay, for the account says that in a great bay on the western side of the lake, "opposite the Isles des quatres vents" (the Four Brothers), one of the canoes upset in a tempest, and Van Curler was drowned. Some accounts say "near Split Rock."

In the death of Van Curler New Netherlands, so recently become New York, suffered a great loss. No other man of his time held so completely the confidence of English, Dutch, French and Iroquois. He is a fine example of the Dutch burgher transplanted from Holland to the wilds of America, there to bear a potent hand in the formation of a new commonwealth. Brave, sagacious, upright, generous, he was at once the friend of the Indian and the deliverer of the Indian's captive. And for more than a century after his death the Indians called the governor of New York "Corlear," personifying the official representative of the white men on the Hudson by this title. As long as the Iroquois tribes were recognized as a political body to be negotiated with by the colonies, the authorities of New York were designated in every treaty as "Corlear." And for many years the lake in which he was drowned was called by both white and red men, "Corlear's Lake."

Peter Schuyler—"Quider"



 HAVE chosen four men to represent the history of this first century, or, rather, I have chosen four events upon the lake which can only be understood by some knowledge of the lives of the men who were the principal actors in them. First, we have two Frenchmen: the discoverer, Samuel de Champlain, and Isaac Jogues, the Jesuit missionary. Then we have two Dutchmen: Arendt van Curler, an example of the early Dutch settlers on the upper Hudson, and last of all Peter Schuyler, first mayor of Albany, judge, land-owner, councilman, fur-trader and Indian Commissioner, and the only one of the four who was born in America.

Peter Schuyler belonged to one of the best and the most influential of the Dutch families who owned vast estates along the Hudson River—the Van Rensselaers, the Van Cortlandts, the Livingstons and the Schuylers, forming a landed aristocracy which held sway over that region in an autocracy almost entirely beneficent, bringing in settlers to clear away the forests and till the land, building sawmills, trading with the Indians, acting as magistrates and colonial officials, and taking command of bands of volunteers upon occasions of Indian attack and depredation, all through the early history of the State of New York.

When the English took possession of New Netherlands, in 1664, Peter Schuyler was only seven years old, and his life was therefore spent under English rule, and the succession of British sovereigns under whom he lived, from Charles II. to George I., had no more faithful subject, and none more active in resistance to the power of France on this continent. The settlements of Albany and Schenectady formed at that time the extreme northwestern frontier of the American colonies, with a stretch of forest and stream three hundred miles to the northward without a single European roof-tree. Then came the tiny French settlements on the St. Lawrence, and it would seem that men who had bowed at the name of the Prince of Peace might have been willing to let that vast gloomy solitude divide them from their enemies. But Count Frontenac landed at Quebec in the summer of 1689, burning with a desire to distinguish himself in the extension of the power of France on this continent. (They say that his beautiful young wife hated him, and had plotted that he might be sent far away from France and among dangers manifold.) Like an arrow from his bow he sent his war-party out, and it struck full where it was aimed—upon the little Dutch village of Schenectady, where Frenchmen had been succored in their need by Van Curler, only twenty-four years before.

Surprised in their sleep in the bitter cold of a February night, the inhabitants were massacred with the utmost barbarity, and the little town was burned, the French returning instantly upon their own trail, and reaching Canada with booty and prisoners before any rally of volunteers could be

made for their pursuit.* The French and their Indian allies whooped and danced for joy on the St. Lawrence, and the tribes on the Mohawk said: "What is this? The white men with the fleur-de-lis are more like us than these stupid, hard-working beavers whom we call the children of Corlear. The Dutchmen let themselves be butchered and burned in their sleep, and now their neighbors will not even strike back at the men who did it! We will make ourselves allies of the French! But first let us see what Quider will do."

And "Quider," which was their name for Peter Schuyler, because they had no sounds in their barren language with which to say "Peter," understood perfectly what thoughts lay behind the impassive faces of the red men, and knew what was necessary to be done. New England, who had her own reckoning to make with Frontenac, fitted out a naval expedition which took Port Royal and menaced Quebec, but this would not serve to protect the naked western frontier of New York, nor deter the northern tribes from swooping down in their "Indian summer" raids through Lake Champlain. There was an attempt to raise and equip a land force, commanded by General Winthrop of Connecticut, to invade Canada by way of the Champlain valley, but the colonies were too weak to carry out the plan effectively, and it was given up. However, enough arms, provisions and canoes had been collected at Albany to fit out a party of thirty white

* While France thrust at England in this raid through the forests of another continent, she made ready for a deadlier blow nearer home, fighting for James Stuart at the battle of the Boyne in Ireland, July 1, 1690.

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men, English and Dutch of the upper Hudson, and one hundred and twenty Indians, and Winthrop gave the command to a younger brother of "Quider," Johannes Schuyler, then only twenty-two years old. They left camp at the head of the lake August 13, 1690, rendezvoused at Crown Point two days after, and then made a dash through the lake and down the Richelieu until they hid their canoes on the river bank and fell upon the men at work in the fields just outside the fort at La Prairie. They killed six men and took nineteen prisoners, destroyed houses, barns and growing crops, and returned in triumph with little loss to themselves. Another raid was made the next spring, also under young Captain Johannes, and these successes had a marked influence upon the Indians, but still they were felt to be less than a sufficient reprisal for the dreadful destruction of Schenectady, where sixty were massacred outright, and many carried away to captivity and torture. Therefore greater preparations were made for the next year, and the opening of spring saw a force of workmen on Wood Creek, as the narrow southern end of Lake Champlain was often called, building canoes and shaping paddles from the trees which they hewed upon the shore. These were perhaps the first vessels built by white men's hands upon the lake—certainly the first in any number. Hitherto the canoes which went through the lake from the south had been carried on men's shoulders over the long portage from the Hudson. Of course nothing could be used for these wilderness journeys but the light bark canoes which the English and Dutch had learned to make as well as the Indians.

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The party numbered two hundred and sixty-six men, one hundred and twenty of whom were Dutch and English, and the rest Mohawk and Mohegan Indians. They were commanded this time by "Quider" himself, and they set out early in July of 1691. The 23d they were at Crown Point, and the 30th at La Prairie, on the St. Lawrence, which they reached an hour before daylight. The French were warned of their approach and Callières was in the fort with seven hundred men. He sent out a party of four hundred against them, but Schuyler and his men met them with great determination, and drove them back into the fort with loss. Then Schuyler fought his way back through an ambush laid between him and the river, and reached his boats again with a loss of only twenty-one whites and twenty-two Indians. Frontenac himself reported this as the most hotly contested engagement of all the border warfare, and it is stated that the French official returns showed a loss of two captains, six lieutenants, five ensigns and three hundred men. Back through the lake came "Quider" in his frail bark flotilla, and all New York and New England breathed more freely, while final conclusions were drawn in the wigwams of the Six Nations. The massacre of Schenectady was avenged, "Quider" had shot Frontenac's arrow straight back into the defences of Canada, and the savage demand for dramatic completeness had received its satisfaction.

No one, not even Sir William Johnson, understood the Indians better than Peter Schuyler, nor dealt with them with greater success, whether in trade or in war. In 1710,

twenty years after the massacre of Schenectady, he took four Mohawk chiefs across the ocean with him to London, where they stayed seven months, going about in their native costume, and making a great sensation. They were presented at Queen Anne's court, and Steele and Addison wrote about them in the *Spectator*. One of them was Hendrick, a very sagacious man, who lived to see almost the final struggle between France and England on this continent, as he was with Sir William Johnson at the battle of Lake George in 1755, and was there killed.

Johannes Schuyler, the younger brother of "Quider," was only less distinguished than he, and his exploits would make perhaps a more romantic story. In 1697 he was sent as envoy by Lord Bellomont, Governor of New York, to Frontenac in Canada, with important letters, and dined in state with the governor at Quebec. He was the grandfather of Gen. Philip Schuyler, Commander-in-chief of the Northern Army in the war of the Revolution.

Peter Schuyler had many descendants. His first wife was Angelica Van Schaick, and his second, whom he married only a few weeks after his return from his expedition into Canada, was Maria Van Rensselaer. He died in 1724, aged sixty-seven years, and was buried in the family burying ground on his own farm at "The Flatts" above Albany, where great trees have grown above him since he played so stirring a part in our early history.

The Indians never allowed the name and fame of later actors on that stage the scenery of which changed so rapidly

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from the forest setting of his day, to displace their respect and affection for Peter Schuyler. Long after his death, at the opening of the Revolution in 1775, a Committee of the Continental Congress, appointed to treat with the Six Nations with the purpose of securing their neutrality in the coming conflict, deemed it necessary to address them in writing with this formal preamble: "We, the representatives of Congress and the descendants of Quider." Thus the memory of Peter Schuyler linked one century with another.

This first century on the lake, the seventeenth in Christian chronology, was the century of the bark canoe, as the second was that of the sailing vessel, and the third was the century of the steamboat. The lake as these four men knew it was an unbroken wilderness from end to end, one hundred and fifty miles of water travel without fall or portage, and with no hindering current—an invitation to red man or white to leave the sheltering forest and seek distant adventure. Not a single home in all the fertile valley, nor a clearing made by the settler's axe. Nothing but the flitting wigwam of the Iroquois, pitched here and there on a sandy plain, and the eagle's nest in the top of the tall pine.

In the next hundred years settlement was much retarded by the events of two decisive wars—one of which gave the lake to England, and another which gave it to the colonists themselves—and it is only in the third century (the nineteenth) that we find full development of natural resources. The fourth now opens before us, perhaps with ships of the air for our children to journey in, but we who love the lake know how little any of these things can ever change it.

New York, May 14, 1909.

WESTPORT INN AND COTTAGES

Westport-on-Lake-Champlain

Eastern Gateway of the Adirondacks



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